

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01

DHA-02 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /095 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7985

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

/AMEMBASSY LAGOS 579

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3312

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, SF, WA

SUBJECT: SAG APPOINTS NAMIBIAN ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL

REF: LONDON 11133,

1. SUMMARY: IN SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT SAG DURING NIGHT OF JULY 6-7 INFORMED MEDIA OF APPOINTMENT OF JUDGE MARTHINUIS T. STEYN, MEMBER OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT, AS ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL OF SWA/NAMIBIA. END SUMMARY.

2. SABC AND MORNING PRESS CARRY SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE ISSUED SOMETIME DURING NIGHT OF JULY 6-7, THAT THE STATE PRESIDENT HAD NAMED MARTHINUIS T. STEYN (57), MEMBER OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE DIVISION OF THE S.A. SUPREME COURT, TO BE THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL FOR NAMIBIA/SWA.

3. WE HAVE VERY LITTLE BIO INFORMATION ON JUDGE STEYN IN OUR CURRENT RECORDS. THESE SHOW HE WAS BORN IN THE FREE

STATE NOVEMBER 5, 1920. HE OBTAINED AN LLB DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN IN 1944. DURING WORLD WAR II HE SERVED AS A LIEUTENANT IN THE SIXTH SOUTH AFRICAN DIVISION WHICH WAS PART OF THE FIFTH ARMY UNDER GENERAL MARK CLARK. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE RETURNED TO SA IN 1947 AND JOINED THE SA BAR IN 1948. HE BECAME SENIOR COUNSEL IN 1965 AND WAS APPOINTED TO PRESENT POSITION IN 1974.

4. HIS FAMILY BACKGROUND IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST. HE IS THE GRANDSON OF THE FREE STATE'S LAST PRESIDENT MARTHINUIS STEYN. HIS FATHER WAS COLIN STEYN, WHO SERVED IN THE SMUTS CABINET AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAS NO AFFILIATION WITH THE NATIONAL PARTY. HE MARRIED YVONNE MAARTENS IN 1949 AND THEY HAVE FOUR CHILDREN. HIS FAMILY BACKGROUND, UCT EDUCATION AND WORLD WAR II RECORD SUGGEST A LIBERAL RATHER THAN A STAUNCH NATIONAL PARTY ORIENTATION, ALTHOUGH WE WANT TO LOOK INTO THIS ASPECT MORE CLOSELY.

5. COMMENT: NONE OF THE FIVE-POWER AMBASSADORS RECEIVED ANY ADVANCE INDICATION OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT. WHEN I TALKED TO FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA EARLIER IN WEEK, HE INDICATED THAT CHOICE WOULD STILL BE A JUDGE BUT DECLINED TO MENTION NAMES OR SPECIFY TIMING OTHER THAN THAT "HE WOULD BE IN PLACE BY AUGUST 1." SIR DAVID SCOTT TALKED WITH BOTHA YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND RECEIVED NO HINT THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WAS IMMINENT.
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Message Attributes

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